Levy of rice

†2303. SHRI BANWARI LAL KANCHHAL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government make equal payment to all the States on account of levy on rice;

(b) whether it is a fact that the levy imposed on rice in case of some States like Punjab, Haryana is on the higher side;

(c) whether it is also a fact that levy imposed on rice producers in Uttar Pradesh is lower;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether Government propose to impose levy on rice producers in Uttar Pradesh equal to that of Punjab and Haryana; and

(f) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) No Sir.

(b) to (f) The levy percentage of rice for each State is fixed by the respective State Governments with the prior concurrence of the Central Government. The present levy percentage fixed for Punjab and Haryana is 75% and for Uttar Pradesh this is 60%. The millers of Uttar Pradesh have been allowed to deliver upto 75% levy rice subject to the condition that deliveries in excess of 60% and upto 75% would be in the form of common (raw and par boiled) rice only.

Authority for combating counterfeit and fake products

2304. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to set up an independent authority to combat the menace of counterfeit and fake products available in the market;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The existing legislations are adequate in combating the menace of counterfeit and fake products available in the market.

Liberalisation of trade in agricultural commodities

2305. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to liberalise the trade in agricultural commodities;

(b) the reasons which forced Government hitherto not to liberalise the said trade;

(c) the impact of this decision on the prices of agricultural commodities;

(d) whether the recent price rise in agricultural commodities is caused by Government's decision to liberalise trade in agricultural commodities; and

(e) if so, whether Government will review its decision on this front?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Agricultural Marketing Reforms, which submitted its report in June 2002, had made a number of recommendations to make the agricultural marketing system more vibrant and competitive. As a follow-up measure, the Central Government, in order to guide the States in the implementation of the suggested reforms, drafted a Model Act on Agricultural Marketing which, Inter-alia, provided for the establishment of direct purchase centers and farmers markets for direct sale to consumers and complete transparency in the pricing system. While some State Governments have amended the Agricultural Produce Marketing Regulation (APMC) Act, some other States have initiated action for making amendments to the Act.

(c) and (d) The reforms in agricultural trade have generally provided opportunities to the farmers for realizing better prices. The reasons for